

Agency 357

Department of Early Learning

Recommendation Summary

Dollars in Thousands

	Annual FTEs	General Fund State	Other Funds	Total Funds
2005-07 Expenditure Authority	92.8	32,604	180	32,784
Total Maintenance Level	184.5	64,024	1,808	65,832
Difference	91.8	31,420	1,628	33,048
Percent Change from Current Biennium	98.9%	96.4%	904.4%	100.8%
Performance Changes				
Family Child Care Provider Labor Agreement	1.5	2,050		2,050
Cost Allocation Development		100		100
Benchmark Redesign Partnership		300		300
Parent, Family & Caregiver Supports	1.5	4,792		4,792
Quality Rating Implementation	9.5	9,280		9,280
Negotiated Rulemaking/Improved Regulations	1.5	281		281
Early Learning Partnerships		190		190
Early Childhood Program Enhancement		26,958		26,958
Federal Child Care Grant Transfer			216,794	216,794
Revise Pension Gain-Sharing #		(10)	(58)	(68)
Nonrepresented Staff Health Benefit		6	33	39
WFSE Collective Bargaining Agreement		176	1,001	1,177
Nonrepresented Staff Salary Change		64	356	420
Subtotal	14.0	44,187	218,126	262,313
Total Proposed Budget	198.5	108,211	219,934	328,145
Difference	105.8	75,607	219,754	295,361
Percent Change from Current Biennium	114.0%	231.9%	122,085.6%	900.9%
Total Proposed Budget by Activity				
Agency Operations/Administration	31.0	3,027		3,027
Child Care Licensing	211.5			
Child Care and Early Learning Quality Initiatives	17.0	11,580	360	11,940
Child Care Subsidies	9.0	2,050	216,794	218,844
Early Learning Programs	21.8	91,194	1,056	92,250
Other Statewide Adjustments		360	1,724	2,084
Total Proposed Budget	290.3	108,211	219,934	328,145

EDUCATION - OTHER

PERFORMANCE LEVEL CHANGE DESCRIPTIONS

Family Child Care Provider Labor Agreement

The labor agreement between the Department of Early Learning (DEL) and family child care workers is funded. Some funding for the agreement is provided in the Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) budget, to be distributed with the provider payments made by DSHS on DEL's behalf. Funding provided directly to DEL will cover implementation costs and subsidy and licensing training expenses.

Cost Allocation Development

The federal Child Care and Development Fund block grant and the Basic Food and Nutrition Program grant require the Department to use a cost allocation model. The Department will contract with a consultant to create a cost allocation model, which also will enable the Department to identify appropriate levels of administrative costs for state-funded programs. Start-up costs for this activity are included in the 2007 supplemental budget.

Benchmark Redesign Partnership

The Department of Early Learning will use one-time funds to pay for a portion of completing the benchmarks redesign project. The Thrive by Five partnership may provide additional project funding.

Parent, Family & Caregiver Supports

Washington Learns recommends development of parent, friend, family, and neighbor supports, including such items as booklets on child care, play and learn resources, and a public awareness campaign. Funding is included for a needs assessment of these and other tools. The Department will enhance the resource and referral telephone line used by parents. Working toward a ten-year vision from Washington Learns, activities such as parenting education workshops, play and learn groups, and integration of programs with social service agencies will be phased in at a rate of ten percent each year.

Quality Rating Implementation

Washington Learns also recommends implementing a quality rating and improvement system for state-funded child care providers in Washington. Ratings will provide parents with valuable information on child care quality in their areas. DEL will determine quality based on a five-star rating system, and will provide providers with technical assistance, training materials and scholarships, mentoring, and accreditation fee grants. Participating providers who achieve higher levels of quality will be paid more for the care of state-subsidized children. Funding is also included to support a committee which will assist in development of the system and provide ongoing advice to the Department.

Negotiated Rulemaking/Improved Regulations

Washington Learns found that current rules and regulations regarding child care are too bureaucratic and do not provide timely information for parents. DEL is charged with creating rules that are concise and clearly focused on keeping children safe and improving their early learning outcomes. This redrafting of early learning rules will require additional staff dedicated to rule writing, including processes to gather input from all interested parties. Before adopting requirements that affect family child care licensees, DEL must engage in negotiated rule making with the exclusive representatives of the family child care licensees.

Early Learning Partnerships

This item will provide grants to local communities across the state so they can pursue the creation or expansion of private-public partnerships.

Early Childhood Program Enhancement

Funding is provided for an additional 1,000 slots per year in the Early Childhood Program to begin meeting the growing demand for this program. In addition, the Governor's Early Learning Council recommended that the per-child rates for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) be raised to match the federal Head Start program rates. (ECEAP funding was originally provided to match federal Head Start rates, but has declined during the past 20 years to only 60 percent of the federal rate.) Funding is provided to increase the ECEAP per-child rates eight percent per year to begin closing the gap with Head Start. ECEAP may direct providers to use the rate increases to pay for proven components of comprehensive programs, such as longer preschool hours, higher teacher pay, increased family supports, lower child-to-staff ratios, and/or extension of the program to younger children.

Federal Child Care Grant Transfer

Some federal support for the state's Working Connections Child Care program is moved from the Department of Social and Health Services to the Department of Early Learning. The Child Care and Development Fund pays in part for the state's child care licensing function, quality initiatives, and some child care subsidies. (General Fund-Federal)

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTIONS**Agency Operations/Administration**

The administration and management of the department includes governance, executive management, fiscal operations, information services, human resources services, planning, and community relations and development.

Child Care Licensing

The department staff are responsible for licensing over 9,000 child care homes and centers providing child care for at least 17,000 children. Licensing staff offer provider orientations, ensure provider applications packets are complete, process background checks, inspect and monitor facilities, investigate complaints, and take corrective action as necessary. Policy staff are responsible for writing rules and interpreting regulations.

Child Care and Early Learning Quality Initiatives

The Department of Early Learning develops and implements programs targeted at improving key components of the child care system to enhance child care quality. The department is piloting a quality rating system linked to a tiered reimbursement that provides clear steps, support and incentives for family home and center-based early learning and school-age providers to increase the quality of services, and improve developmental outcomes for children. The Head Start - State Collaboration Office supports development of multi-agency and public/private partnerships at the state level to enhance the capacity of Head Start and other childhood programs and improve outcomes for children.

Child Care Subsidies

The Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) program provides payments for child care services to all Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients, WorkFirst participants, and non-TANF, low-income parents who participate in employment, work activities, and training. Child care assistance allows low-income families to attain and maintain self-sufficiency. The state also partially subsidizes child care for families with seasonal employment, as well as homeless and teen parent populations.

Early Learning Programs

Early learning programs focus on ensuring that children are ready to learn when they transition to kindergarten. These programs include Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and Early Reading Grants. ECEAP programs offer literacy, language, math, science, health, medical linkages, social and emotional development, and family support services. The Department monitors contracts to ensure compliance with statewide standards and provides technical support, training and development to the 33 local ECEAP contractors. The Early Reading Initiative provides grants for community-based initiatives to develop pre-reading and early reading skills through parent and community involvement, public awareness, coordination of resources, and partnerships with local school districts.

Other Statewide Adjustments

This item reflects proposed compensation and other adjustments that were not allocated to individual agency activities. The agency will assign these costs to the proper activities after the budget is enacted.